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ABSTRACT

The history of Dayton Women Working (DWW) illustrates both the achievements and failures of contemporary feminist organization. Established in 1975 to address the problems of low wages, sex discrimination, and unfair working conditions facing women in Dayton (Ohio), DWW focused on a broad range of activities including publishing a quarterly newsletter, distributing leaflets in factories and office buildings, holding job counseling clinics, and conducting boycotts. In 1977, Dayton Women Working, as a result of membership in the National Women's Employment Project (NWEP), narrowed its attention to federal employment legislation and programs. Among DWW's and NWEP's major successes was a case study of discrimination against women in the banking industry. By 1980, DWW had effectively ceased to exist, a result of excess dependence on federal funding, lack of focus, lack of an active membership, and a leadership which did not reflect the background or elicit the contributions of its own membership. (LP)

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"CAUGHT UP IN OUR OWN MYTH":

THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF DAYTON WOMEN WORKING

Paper presented at the Berkshire Conference
on the History of Women
(6th, North Hampton, MA, June 1984)

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Soon after Betty Friedan published her surprise best-seller, The Feminine Mystique in 1963, soon after women civil right's activists began to demand equality not just for blacks but for themselves in 1965, soon after the first chapters of the National Organization of Women (N.O.W.) and consciousness raising groups had begun in 1966 and 1967 in cities like Chicago and New York, organized feminism arrived in Dayton, Ohio.[1] Dayton Women Working, one of several avowedly feminist groups established in Dayton in the mid-seventies, deserves attention. Its history helps illustrate both achievements and failures of contemporary feminist organization, not just in a moderately sized Ohio city but throughout the nation.

Dayton has for decades shared with Muncie, Indiana the dubious, but on many counts, justifiable, distinction of the "typical small American city." During the seventies the reputation persisted. Pollsters chose the city of roughly 200,000 citizens for random sampling with decidedly unrandom regularity. It was a frequent test market, its population given sneak previews of new movies, soaps, underarm deodorants.[2] Dayton, interestingly, was a kind of midwestern "test market" for the contemporary women's movement as well. As early as 1969--a group calling itself Dayton Women's Liberation organized consciousness raising workshops, a hot line to answer questions about feminism, and a "Speakers' Bureau" of members willing to proselytise.[3] Once established, feminist groups in Dayton echoed patterns apparent in better-known and older organizations in other cities. One group, Dayton Women Working, while a latecomer, established in 1975, achieved national attention for its efforts not only to organize women office workers in Dayton but also to establish a national network of working women s groups.

This analysis of the history of Dayton Women Working will examine the group's origins, its major projects, its achievements and failures.

Sherrie Holmes, the catalyst for Dayton Women Working, matched a profile historians have begun to draw of the women's movement activist. A Dayton native, she was passionately involved with the anti-war movement of the sixties and with leftist politics. She was a central figure in the Dayton chapter of the New American Movement. Although not a college student herself, her leadership in South Ohio of efforts to protest the war in Vietnam brought her into contact with many other young women in their twenties, both students and non-students. In 1975, frustrated that her male colleagues in N.A.M. did not take women's issues seriously, Holmes and others organized the first Dayton chapter of N.O.W., and Holmes drew up plans for a Women in the Work Force Task Force. Within months the N.O.W. task force decided to establish itself as a separate organization, choosing in April, 1975, the name, Dayton Women Working.[4]

By 1976 Noreen Willhelm had joined Sherrie Holmes as the second driving force behind the new organization, which had pledged to "address the problems of low wages, sex discrimination and unfair working conditions" facing women.[5] Willhelm, like Holmes a white political activist in her twenties, arrived from Toledo to help campaign in Dayton for a better utilities rate regulation system. Before dropping out of college she too had been active in the anti war movement. Like Holmes, who had helped to pay the rent with a series of clerk-typist jobs, Willhelm, a waitress, had worked at a traditional, poorly-paid women's job. However, unlike most waitresses, she had become active in a union, eventually becoming a steward in the Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union. To a woman with experience in labor organization and interest in feminism, Dayton Women Working seemed like the "perfect" cause.[6]

At first D.W.W. defined working women very broadly and attempted to

involve itself in numerous projects. Beginning in June, 1975, it issued Dayton Women Working, a quarterly newsletter, which featured explanations of federal and state equal employment legislation. In clear language, the newsletters defined such legal phrases as "adverse impact" "disparate treatment" and "prima facie discrimination" and provided addresses for government agencies.[7] Utilizing prior training in union and anti-war organizing, D.W.W. leaders leafleted factories and office buildings and distributed questionnaires. One questionnaire featured the headline: "IS IT LEGAL?" Women workers who took the time to take the true/false test enclosed learned whether an employee could refuse to hire a female job applicant because, for instance, the job had always previously been filled by men, the job required supervising male prisoners, the applicant was divorced, with custody of small children, or the job required lifting 30 pound cartons.[8] D.W.W.'s "Worst Company" and "Pettiest Boss" awards earned the organization plenty of free local publicity. Contenders for one "Petty Boss" contest included the head of a jewelry firm who used clear nail polish on his fingernails and had his secretary paint the right hand nails, a boss who required an employee to go to his home to feed his dog, a physician who sent his bookkeeper downtown to buy a plunger to fix a clogged commode, and a businessman who required his secretary to check him over carefully each day to see that he was properly dressed, the "check" to include a quick-review to make sure his socks matched. Dr. Charles Moody, the physician, received his award when several D.W.W. members showed up at his offices unannounced to deliver a toilet plunger, with a rose attached.[9]

D.W.W. in its first two years of existence also held job counseling clinics for women, began a survey of job discrimination experienced by

construction trades, and helped organize a Dayton-area boycott of textiles manufactured by J.P. Stevens Co.[10] The organization, with only about a dozen extremely active members, was stretched dangerously thin, even with a leader who was a self-described "workaholic."[11]

Interestingly enough the necessary narrowing of focus was "forced" on Dayton Women Working, not chosen voluntarily.[12] In 1977, D.W.W. was a founding member of the National Women's Employment Projects, a consortium of six working women's organizations. The N.W.E.P., launched with a $25,000 grant from the Rockefeller Family Fund, administered through one of its Washington-based philanthropies, the Youth Project, chose to emphasize the problems of office workers. N.W.E.P. decided to coordinate two projects: monitoring federal equal job opportunity programs, and investigating employment discrimination in banks.[13] Dayton Women Working, under pressure from the older and better established consortium members, especially Boston's 9 to 5, adopted the national program, with its focus on review of federal laws and programs.[14]

Member organizations, Women Employed in Chicago, 9 to 5 in Boston, Dayton Women Working, Cleveland Women Working, Women Organized for Employment in San Francisco, and Women Office Workers in New York agreed to a goal: "To see that bureaucracy works."[15] N.W.E.P.'s own bureaucracy experienced immediate problems. Disputes about equitable distribution of grant monies led to the departure of Women Employed by October 1977.[16] Nevertheless, the five remaining working women's organizations did win some victories in efforts to make the N.W.E.P. a research monitoring and advocacy project to work for national administrative and policy changes needed to make equal employment opportunity a reality in the office for millions of women and minorities.[17]

Interestingly, the successes and failures of the National Women's Employment Project paralleled the successes and failures of Dayton Women Working. The successes were qualified ones and concerned projects and programs. The N.W.E.P. did establish itself as a watchdog to review the effectiveness of federal agencies whose programs affected women clerical workers. Key agencies included the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (O.F.C.C.P.), the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (E.E.O.C.). To carry out monitoring of the E.E.O.C., for example, the N.W.E.P. established a set of guidelines which it distributed to all member groups. Local groups were to notice: "Are people being discouraged from filing complaints? How are backlog cases being handled? How are offices operating? What is staff morale? What are criteria for targeting of companies?"[18] From 1977-79 both the N.W.E.P. and D.W.W. made their presence felt among federal bureaucrats. N.W.E.P. President Ellen Cassedy and others successfully lobbied the Senate Government Affairs Committee and the House Committee on Government Operations on behalf of changes proposed by the Carter Administration in 1979 to increase the strength of the E.E.O.C. by giving the agency enforcement authority for the Equal Pay Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.[19] The N.W.E.P. felt, rightly, that the smaller E.E.O.C. would be more responsive to pressures and more interested in women's employment issues than would the Department of Labor, the original enforcement agency for these laws. While leaders of the N.W.E.P. tried to establish alliances in Congress, the White House, and the Office of Management and Budget, and among civil rights groups, leaders of D.W.W. played similar roles on the state level; D.W.W. formed alliances with such groups as the Urban League, the N.A.A.C.P., the Black Political

Assembly, and the Dayton Human Relations Council. It lobbied local, state, and regional offices of federal enforcement agencies, such as the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, O.F.C.C.P. and E.E.O.C. Acknowledging the role D.W.W. had played, the E.E.O.C. opened a Dayton office in fall, 1978. Previously, people with complaints had had to travel to Cincinnati.[20]

No revolution in speed or dedication to enforcement occurred among federal agencies, but President Jimmy Carter adopted a basically friendly posture toward women's groups seeking more vigorous federal enforcement of anti-discrimination statutes. Even the N.W.E.P. did not claim that any increased federal effectiveness was due solely to its efforts. In fact, by May, 1979 N.W.E.P. officers were considering moving in other directions. Meeting in Cleveland, the directors of the affiliate groups, who formed the N.W.E.P. Board, agreed that "We should reevaluate our relations with the agencies: try to de-emphasize making the agencies the enemy. Otherwise we might as well make the agencies our friends, so that we can get the most out of them." Concluding that the N.W.E.P. program of agency review was "too much work" with questionable results, the N.W.E.P. adjourned.[21]

What came to be called "The Banking Study" was another qualified success for both the N.W.E.P. and D.W.W. In 1977, as part of its program of review of federal compliance, the N.W.E.P. sought to make a case study of an industry with a record of discrimination against women employees and poor compliance with Affirmative Action regulations. Banks, according to N.W.E.P., "notorious" in both categories, deserved scrutiny.[22]

D.W.W. plunged enthusiastically into the project; its analysis of discrimination practiced against women workers by the banking industry of Dayton was to be its most important project and most significant success.

D.W.W. soon learned that three-quarters of the employees of the three major banks in Dayton were women. Over 89% of these women worked in poorly-paid office and clerical jobs. Her attempts to meet with bank executives foiled by bank refusals, Noreen Willhelm, Program Coordinator of D.W.W., filed a claim under the Freedom of Information Act with the U.S. Department of Treasury for access to the Affirmative Action programs of the three major full service banks in Dayton. Using these Affirmative Action reports, surveys and interviews with female bank employees, annual reports, banking directories, and other documents in the public record, D.W.W. printed a pamphlet of charges: Major Dayton banks were not seriously committed to equal employment opportunity. Banks limited Affirmative Action efforts to the creation of Affirmative Action plans; most plans were "inadequate" and out of date; women employees were "shortchanged."[23] Under Executive Order 11246, banks, as holder of federal deposits, had the status of federal contractors, and as such had to fulfill federal guidelines regarding affirmative action in employment. The Labor Department, as the agency charged with enforcement of contract compliance, agreed in 1978 to investigate D.W.W.'s charges that Third National, First National, and Winters National Bank of Dayton practiced employment discrimination against women.[24]

The "banking study" generated much local publicity. Open meetings, such as one held July 10, 1978, to release information about the bank's affirmative action plans, attracted good crowds.[25] Women employed in banks began to mail in anonymous testimonials. Citing fear of job reprisal, one woman, who, like most bank employees, asked that her name not be used in D.W.W. publicity wrote:

"I used to be a person who was hurt and embarrassed (sic) that I was paid so little. I thought there was something wrong with me, that I was being singled out. However, I recently learned, that this is not the case, that many of the women in my department that have been with the bank a long time, make even less than I do."[25]

Barred from distributing materials within banking offices themselves, members stood on downtown streetcorners handing out over two thousand questionnaires to women office workers headed towards banks. Women who filled out the twenty-six item questionnaires were to use a point system to rate their jobs: a "yes" equalled two points, a "not sure" one point, and a "no" zero points. Questions included "Are you permitted to discuss salaries with co-workers?" "Are there training programs available within your bank?" "Are women promoted at the same rate as men?" "Is there an effective grievance procedure to deal with discrimination?" Banks rating fewer than twenty points were "not good places to work. Watch out or call D.W.W."[27]

Female bank employees who saw the questionnaire may have heeded the advice to "watch out". Large numbers did not heed the advice to "call DWW." By May of 1980, when U.S. Department of Labor investigators charged Third National Bank with a "pattern of discrimination against its minority and women employees", D.W.W. was crumbling, an organization unable to capitalize on this victory, unable to fight for the nearly one million dollars in back pay the initial Labor Department review said was due 110 employees who had " uffered the effects of past discrimination," unable to challenge a retreat sanctioned by the Federal Office of Contract Compliance.[28]

By the late summer of 1980 D.W.W. had effectively ceased to exist. Its projects had given it prominence in the local community. Sherrie Holmes

rightfully labeled herself and other activists within D.W.W. as "spokepersons", the people news-reporters called for "what feminists' reactions were to this or that."[29] D.W.W. was one of many feminist organizations demanding that attention be paid to problems women encountered as workers. The "Petty Boss" awards, the "Do You Work for This Year's Worst Company" contests, the scrutiny of federal enforcement of equal employment legislation, the attack on Dayton banks, had focused attention on the office and women workers.[30]

Leaders of D.W.W. did deserve to take some credit for raising the consciousness of office employers. As Sherrie Holmes explained, "But now it's not so common for the boss to just throw papers on a secretary's desk, at least they ask them to type them...it's well known that household type tasks like making coffee are a pretty political issue."[31]

Getting an executive to make his own coffee or recognize that his secretary was not "his girl" was a success, just as winning a Dayton E.E.O.C. office and forcing a Labor Department inquiry were successes. But in all cases these successes were limited ones. Forcing a boss to pay higher wages as well as lip service, fighting the closing of the E.E.O.C. office in Dayton, getting a less sympathetic Republican administration after 1980 to support equal opportunity enforcement vigorously, pursuing charges against Dayton financial institutions through multiple levels of administrative and legal review would have required that D.W.W. enjoy a large and committed membership and secure source of funding. But money and membership woes plagued both D.W.W. and its national umbrella, N.W.E.P.

D.W.W. failed to recruit an active membership. By 1980, the organization's membership files listed more than two hundred names, but

at no time was more than a fraction of that number heavily involved. Many were tardy in paying even the nominal $3 yearly dues.[32]

A consensus emerges from interviews that the average member of D.W.W. was a clerical worker, white, in her twenties. Most "didn't feel as though they had time for the leadership."[33] D.W.W.'s two most important leaders, Sherrie Holmes and Noreen Willhelm, both acknowledged that they made the decisions without much consultation with their members.[34] They did not create this leadership style solely in reaction to members' apathy. Rather both, as veterans of the women's movement, felt that the emphasis on communal decisions what had characterized feminist organizations like Dayton Women's Liberation, Dayton's Women's Center, and even to some extent the Dayton Chapter of N.O.W., had created chaos, not unique and peacefully democratic "woman-space."

Though also white and in their twenties, neither Willhelm nor Holmes led lives similar to those of their members. Neither had ever married; both had born babies out of wed-lock. In fact to blur the differences, they once discussed wearing wedding rings to D.W.W. meetings.[35] Both lived in communal houses; both had come of age in the late-sixties as anti-war activists. Both had ties with leftist politics. Kathy Ellison, a friend of Holmes and a member of D.W.W. while a law student, recalled decisions made by Holmes and Willhelm to avoid certain feminist issues which might "alienate the average secretary or clerk". Abortion, socialism, and lesbianism, for instance, were not to be debated.[38] Sherrie Holmes, a long-time N.A.M. member, continued to try to persuade N.A.M., both locally and nationally, to become more involved with working women's issues. In a memo titled, "Summary of Clerical Organizing in Dayton", she argued, "This (Dayton) project is important because 1) it is an important part of a

nation-wide test of the organizing potential of clericals 2) it is important for N.A.M. to build ties with this sector 3) it is important to build ties with other clerical organizers."[39]

In fact, D.W.W.'s leaders did build ties with other clerical organizers. Moreover, they built ties with government officials and private philanthropists. Their ties with their own members, who became accustomed to having programs delivered to them ready-made, were the crucial, but neglected, ties.

Of course, D.W.W.'s two most important programs, the scrutiny of federal enforcement of equal employment legislation and the investigation of the banks, were national projects of the N.W.E.P., not independently chosen. In each of the N.W.E.P. chapters, Noreen Willhelm argued, one woman "was" the organization. If Sherrie Holmes "was" D.W.W., Helen Williams "was" Cleveland Women Working; Karen Nussbaum "was" Boston 9 to 5.[40] These strong, intelligent women took on big challenges. But in many cases, not just in the case of D.W.W., the romance of battles against American banking czars or federal power-brokers wooed them away from the tedium of membership drives. And women officer workers, socialized already by job and family to be deferential and quiet, often remained deferential and quiet when they confronted their own organization's authority-figures. Unlike meetings at the Dayton Women's Center, which often boiled with charges, counter-charges, and both good and bad feelilngs, D.W.W. held its meetings punctually at the end of workdays, followed Robert's Rules, and experienced little internal discord. But its members, at least as evidenced by the majority's lack of activism, did not care passionately whether D.W.W. survived and grew.[41]

The leaders in the N.W.E.P. network, who did care passionately about the survival of their organizations, were unable to agree with each other. D.W.W.'s own meetings may have been orderly; N.W.E.P. board meetings were not. A memo to the N.W.E.P. Board from Heleny Cook of the Youth Program hinted at the discord. Announcing her departure as a grant administrator, Cook wrote in 1977, "No matter what you decide for next year, I think on a fundamental, subtle level you have all come to know and communicate better. You are, I believe, just becoming able to be a little more honest with each other. In many senses I feel I have helped that process, and it may well stop when I leave."[42]

One of the issues about which N.W.E.P. leaders wrangled was money. In fact, lack of money became, along with membership recruitment and involvement, a serious problem for both N.W.E.P. and D.W.W. In both the national and local organizations, leaders depended heavily on monies granted by the federal government or private philanthropies. When those funding sources disappeared so too did the organizations they fostered. D.W.W. in that sense was not just a product of sixties activism, an outgrowth of the women's movement, it was also a product of the Great Society which made federal monies available for local community-action projects. At all times between 1976 and 1980 the great bulk of monies available to D.W.W. were federal funds. C.E.T.A. paid the salaries of its full time "Director-Organizer", its full-time "Program-Organizer"; and its part time office manager.[43]

Between 1978-79 the V.I.S.T.A. program provided funds for a V.I.S.T.A. worker, who was, ironically, installed at D.W.W. offices with federal money in order to "allow constituents to develop their leadership skills and make decisions affecting D.W.W."[44] The paid V.I.S.T.A. volunteer was to

"encourage members to volunteer their time."[45]

Dayton churches like the Miami/Presbytery and the United Church of Christ provided a few thousand dollars.[46] By 1980, D.W.W. leaaders learned, however, that they "had worn out their welcome" at these private charities, which were inclined to give only one or two years of seed money.[47] In like fashion, the N.W.E.P. was finding it difficult to find grant money to replace its start-up Rockefeller grant. By 1978 Ellen Cassedy, president of the N.W.E.P. Board, was sending plaintive memos, listing the philanthropies which had turned her down A postscript scrawled at bottom of one memo, telescoped her frustration:

> PS: I just had a dream that I went out to lunch with Susan Beresford (of the Ford Foundation). When I took the check up to the cash register, the bill was $65. I was alarmed because I didn't have that much, so I asked Susan if she might help out. She said she was really sorry but she just couldn't. What could this possibly mean??? I think I need either a vacation or a grant.[48]

On neither a national nor a local level did membership dues provide anything more than token funding. By 1980 "working woman" was not quite as fashionable a buzzword with foundations. Moreover, other groups, with fewer radical connections, had entered into the competition for private grant money. In Dayton groups like the Y.W.C.A. started providing career seminars and workshops for older women seeking to re-enter the work force. Some of the funding sources which had earlier backed D.W.W. decided they would rather support working women by supporting the Y.W.C.A. "It wasn't as controversial."[49] By 1980 a new Republican administration headed the federal bureaucracy. Sherrie Holmes was certainly right that in the seventies, federal money was easier to get under the Democrats.[50]

Leaders of D.W.W. did "get caught up in our own myth before we even created it."[51] Ambitious programs eclipsed grass-roots organizing. Take-charge leaders left followers with little to do, and, not surprisingly, they did little. D.W.W., born in 1975, was dead by 1980. An accurate autopsy would suggest that causes of death included excess dependence on federal funding, over-bearing, if well-meaning, leadership, and lack of focus. D.W.W. did not see itself as a union for clerical workers. Neither did it see itself as a "Women's Center" for clerical workers, a place for women to come to be together to talk about their social relationships, their home-lives, their struggles. Its objectives, like many Great Society programs living on soft money, became a pastiche of high-sounding rhetoric, its rationales for existence created to meet monthly V.I.S.T.A or C.E.T.A. program officers' deadlines.

Does the death of D.W.W. indicate that women office workers are exceedingly difficult to organize? Not necessarily. By 1979 Karen Nussbaum of Boston 9 to 5 was urging fellow N.W.E.P. Board members to "occasionally let the thought of unions float through our minds."[52] N.W.E.P. which ceased to exist formally in 1979 did not cease to exist in the same way that D.W.W. has ceased to exist. It became, under the new name "Working Women" a project of the National Association of Office Workers.[53] Its alliance with the union movement has indeed become firmer. In 1981 Working Women and the Service Employees International Union (S.E.I.U.) formed District 925, specifically to organize office workers. For the past 15 years, unions have grown substantially only in "women's work" areas. In the seventies, unions experienced their greatest gains among teachers, health care, and other public sector workers. As a result, union percentages of women members have risen. The most recent

Labor Department survey available indicated that among workers not in unions, women were more interested in organizing than were men.[54]

Dayton Women Working, then, like a hot-house tomato, grew spindly, its growth rushed through infusions of federal money, its organizational and membership roots insecure. The heady option for D.W.W. leaders of flying off to Washington to act as consultants to the U.S. Labor Department, to report on the administration of grants, temporarily beckoned. In retrospect Noreen Willhelm correctly judged herself and cohorts in D.W.W. to be "politically naive".[55] "We were caught up in our own myth,"[56] she said.

By 1980 the D.W.W. leaders had less time to see themselves in romantic "mythic" roles as agitators for the rights of working women. Willhelm became a full time newspaper reporter; Holmes left for California; Ellison graduated from law school and became an attorney "with clients" who "couldn't pass out leaflets."[57] Without money, without leaders, Dayton Working Women collapsed, but judging from the files of letters sent it by women bank employees angered by their low pay and status, D.W.W. did not die because the soil was too stony.

FOOTNOTES

[1]For insights into contemporary feminism see: Sara Evans, Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left (New York: Knopf, 1979); Gayle Graham Yates, What Women Want: The Ideas of the Movement (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975); William Chafe, Women and Equality: Changing Patterns in American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); William Chage, "Feminism of the 1970's" Dissent, 21, Fall, 1974, pp 508-517.

[2]Bruce Ronald, Dayton, The Gem City (Tulsa, Okla: Continental Heritage Press, 1981).

[3]The Records of Dayton Women's Liberation, The American History Research Collection, Archives, Wright State University Library, Dayton, Ohio, [hereafter, D.W.L., W.S.U.].

[4]Noreen Willhelm, interview with author, July 18, 1983, Dayton, Ohio [hereafter: Willhelm interview]; for discussion of links between the women's movement and leftist politics see Sara Evans, Personal Politics, esp. chpts. 7-9.

[5]The Records of Dayton Women Working, The American History Research Collection, Archives, Wright State University Library, Dayton, Onio. "Joint Fund Raising Proposal", March, 1977, Bx 1, #18, [hereafter: D.W.W., W.S.U.]

[6]Willhelm interview

[7]See Newsletter File, D.W.W., W.S.U.; see for eg, winter, 1976 issue, vol.1, #5, "Women: Discrimination, the Law and You."

[8]Noreen Willhelm File, Bx 1, #11, D.W.W., W.S.U. Women turning the

page of the questionairre would learn that the employee could "absolutely not" refuse to hire a woman just because the job had always previously been filled by men, that the employer could refuse to hire a woman to as a guard for male prisoners - though the writers of the questionnaire castigated the authors of the Supreme Court decision judging sex to be a bonafide occupational qualification for work as guards in prisons as "sexist pigs", that "it depends" on company policies about hiring divorced people, that the woman should be given a chance to show her ability to lift the cartons.

[9]See the Dayton Daily News, May 5, 1978; The Dayton Journal Herald, May 5, 1978.

[10]D.W.W. Progress Report, July, 1978, "Progress Reports", Bx 1, #8, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[11]Sherrie Holmes, interview with Dorothy Smith, San Rafael, California, June 30, 1983, [hereafter Holmes interview]. Other D.W.W. members echoed Holmes comments about her hard work and central role. To Kathy Ellison "Sherry started it (D.W.W.) and ran it (D.W.W.) as she wished. Nobody got mad," Kathy Ellison, interview with author, Dayton, Ohio, August 10, 1983, [hereafter Ellison interview].

[12]Willhelm interview.

[13]Minutes of N.W.E.P. meeting, Oct. 8, 1977, Chicago,"N.W.E.P. Memos and Correspondence". Bx 4, #1, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[14]Willhelm interview.

[15]Memo to N.W.E.P. Board for Heleny Cook, April 13, 1977, "N.W.E.P. Memos and Correspondence" Bx 4, #2, D.W.W., W.S.U.: Willhelm interview.

[16]Memo to N.W.E.P. Board from Heleny Cook, Oct. 31, 1977, "N.W.E.P. Memos and Correspondence" Bx 4, #2, D.W.W., W.S.U.; Willhelm interview.

[17]Ellen Cassedy, Notes from N.W.E.P. Meeting, July 15-16, 1979,

Cleveland, N.W.E.P. Memos and Correspondence" Bx 4, #2, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Sherrie Holmes sat on the Advisory Board of the Urban Leagues; D.W.W. Progress Report, Jan-July, 1978, "Progress Reports" Bx 1, #8, D.W.W., W.S.U. By 1980 the office had shut down, however, and complaintants once again had to travel to Cincinnati.

[21] "Notes from Ohio Meeting in Cleveland, May 14, 1979," "Working Women: Correspondence", Bx 4, #6, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[22] Memo from Karen Nussbaum to N.W.E.P. Groups, August 21, 1979, "Banking Study", Bx 3, #14, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[23] Noreen Willhelm to Mr. Marvin Michel, Vice President, Personnel, First National Bank, Dayton, Feb. 13, 1978, "Correspondence, Banking Study," Bx 3, #14, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[24] D.W.W. Pamphlet, "Banks: Discrimination in Employment, a Dayton Working Women Study: Employment Discrimination in Dayton's Three Largest Commercial Banks," July 10, 1978, Introduction, D.W.W., W.S.U. [hereafter "Banks"].

[25] Ibid. Introduction.

[26] Notes: "Banking Industry Research: Evidence compiled by Dayton Women Working and Cleveland Women Working", 1979, p 15, Bx 3, #15, D.W.W., W.S.U. [hereafter "Banking Industry Research"]

[27] D.W.W. Progress Report, Jan-July, 1978, "Progress Report". Bx 1, #8, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[28] See: "Banking Industry Research", p 3

[29] Ibid. pp 20-21

[30] Dayton Journal Herald, May 30, 1980; Willhelm interview. Indeed as of

1983, most of the nearly $1 million in back pay cited as a "prospective remedial action" in the 1980 Labor Department became a bargaining chip in later settlements between Third National and other federal agencies. Compromises with the Chicago regional office of Federal Contract Compliance substantial reduced the charges.

[31]Holmes interview.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Membership files, card indexes, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[35]Holmes interview; Willhelm interview - membership cards do not list race. Recollections about percentages of black members differ - though nobody felt more than about a fifth of the membership was black. A rise in black members occured after Deborah Walker, a black hospital worker, joined and began actively recruiting black women.

[36]Holmes interview; Willhem interview.

[37]Willhelm interview; Ellison interview.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Sherrie Holmes, typewritten memo, (probably, from context, early 1977?,) D.W.W., W.S.U.

[40]Willhelm interview.

[41]Ibid; several of the rank and file members identified by the author using D.W.W. membership rolls, when contacted, commented about Holmes' charismatic but relatively authoritarian leadership style. They expressed no willingness to be quoted directly.

[42]Memo, Heleny Cook to N.W.E.P. Board, Sept. 20, 1977, Bx 4, #2, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[43]See Financial Statements of Dayton Women Working, "Financial Records".

Bx 1, #3, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[44]V.I.S.T.A. Study, "Project Report", HQ02-390-3, (interviewer, Charles Hefner), Sept. [illegible], 1978, Bx 1, #19, "Fundraising - V.I.S.T.A.", D.W.W., W.S.U.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Financial Statements of Dayton Women Working, Box 1, #3, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[47]Willhelm interview.

[48]Memo, Ellen Cassedy to N.W.E.P. groups, June 23, 1978, "Correspondence", Bx 4, #2, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[49]Holmes interview.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Willhelm interview.

[52]Karen Nussbaum, memo, May 14, 1979, "Working Women Correspondence", Bx 4, #6, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[53]Memo, Ellen Cassedy to N.W.E.P. Board, "Future of N.W.E.P.", May 10, 1979, Bx 4, #2, D.W.W., W.S.U.

[54]Steve Askin, "Female Rights Spell Trouble for Bosses", In These Times, July 27-August 9, 1983, p 11.

[55]Willhelm interview.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Ellison interview.